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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary

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Mr. Secretary, I am honored today to represent the Government of the United States at the signing of this amendment to the Agreement for the Supply of Agricultural Products.

I feel on this occasion we should establish for the record precisely what this agreement represents, not only in terms of the volume and value of trade, but in terms of future cooperation between our producers and our nations.

We have only to review events of the past 8 months to understand the great potential we possess for mutually beneficial trade and interdependence. We have only to review recent history to understand that we need each other.

Last January 16 in Washington, D.C., the Governments of Mexico and the United States signed the Agreement for the Supply of Agricultural Products. With that signing we established the basis for Mexican purchases of U.S. agricultural commodities this year. We gave Mexico supply access guarantees which are unique among our traditional trading policies. Together, we have entered what we hope will be a long age of prosperous trade and cooperation.

Since the January agreement, total Mexican purchases of U.S. agricultural commodities in 1980 have increased significantly. You came to us at a time when drought and frost had cut into your production. Your growing demand for food stemming from population and income growth necessitated increased imports. And we were there. At the same time the sale of almost 10 million tons of U.S. agricultural products to Mexico this year has been of great importance to our farmers.

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Statement prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland at a signing ceremony for the Amendment to U.S.-Mexico Agreement for the Supply of Agricultural Products, Mexico City, Mexico, September 18, 1980

I can assure you today that the United States will continue to be a dependable supplier of agricultural commodities to Mexico as long as the need exists.

As a result of the agreement, both countries have worked hard to resolve the difficulties affecting the movement of commodities across the border. We have succeeded in streamlining bureaucratic obstacles. Shipments which just one year ago were averaging 200,000 tons a month, are now approaching the one-million-ton mark.

The agricultural systems of this earth are bound together by common problems. An arable land base, diminishing water supplies, and the difficulties of irrigation are not confined by political structures. The weather--your drought and frost in 1979 and our drought this year--does not recognize national boundaries. Countries around the globe face issues of agricultural productivity, credit, mounting farming costs, insurance, and income support.

Our problems are not unique to ourselves. So let us share our strengths and our resources. Then let us share in the resulting benefits.

We do not need to note the success of the January agreement with words. We are marking that success today by formalizing still greater increases in trade.

If the January agreement set forth our recognition of mutual benefit accruing from cooperation, today we reaffirm that recognition. Mexico and the United States have developed one of the largest and fastest-growing commercial relations between any two trading partners in history.

If the January agreement opened trade in 1980, today we increase that trade and establish a basis for cooperation into 1981 and beyond.

Our mutual prosperity depends on our individual well-being. The Government of the United States wishes the Government of Mexico great success with its Sistema Agricultura Mexicana and looks forward to working with Mexico for the common good.

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